



Organizational Structure and Nonprofit Minority HIV Organizations: A Qualitative Study of the Effects of Funder-Mandated Organizational Requirements

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Minority community-based organizations (MCBOs) that provide HIV services were studied to determine how organizational infrastructure is impacted by internal leadership and funder-mandated organizational activities. Previous research has addressed how community-based organizations form and what role charismatic leadership has in organizational development however, only limited research had been conducted to describe the same landscape of minority organizations. Data for the research were gathered through records review, a Web-based internet survey of organizational activities and characteristics, and a semi-structured interview of organizational founders and directors. The study focused on MCBOs that received Ryan White CARE Act funding in the Minority AIDS Initiative (MAI) program during FY 2006. MCBO was defined as an organization where the staff, board, and clients were 50% or more minorities. The study was qualitative in nature with a purposive strategy. The participants in this study were staff from 15 MCBOs and 12 founders/directors (six of each). The approaches to collecting data were a 59-question semi-structured interview divided into eight organization/management categories asked of the founders and directors, a records review of materials submitted by the organizations via the internet, and a 43-question organizational survey divided into six organization/management categories, which was completed by MCBOs staff. The research explored organizational characteristics of the 15 MCBOs, development of documents associated with organizational infrastructure, including policies and procedures, and attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs of the 6 founders and 6 current executive directors on topics ranging from community and government response to HIV/AIDS, mandated organizational activities and infrastructure development, and organizational leadership. Several themes that emerged include shared organizational leadership experiences around individual control, internal and external pressures, accountability and infrastructure, leadership and decision points, and community attitudes and organizational influence. These shared experiences, along with the acceptance of federal funding, were the basis of the organizations experiencing various levels of success moving to a bureaucratic system of organizational structure from one best described as a personocracy---a system guided by the personality of the founder/director.

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